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U. S. Department of Agriculture

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

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June 14, 1941

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AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

TO AVOID UNDUE DEPLETION OF VEGETABLE OIL STOCKS and to insure ample supplies for defense as well as normal requirements, the Department of Agriculture has announced changes in provisions of the agricultural conservation program to encourage increased production of soybeans for oil. Department officials pointed out that the flow of supplies from some of the normal sources of fats and oils have been interrupted due to war conditions. Under these circumstances, they said, some increase in domestic production of fats and oils in 1941 may be necessary to maintain a normal volume for consumption without a material reduction in stocks. The situation is not expected to be serious in 1941-42 but Department officials indicated that in view of national defense needs it was deemed advisable to take immediate steps to increase the production of soybeans this year. Although a relatively strong market is expected to be maintained as a result of increasing domestic demand, the Department will utilize its available resources to provide price support to AAA co-operators for soybeans.

A CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION of 152 defense housing units at Greenbelt, Md., -- the first of 1,000 such units -- has been awarded by the Farm Security Administration to J. A. Johnson Construction Company of Brooklyn, N. Y. The amount of the successful bid was \$538,836, or an average of \$3,545 per unit. The contractor expects to complete the job in 120 days. Management policies governing the homes will be worked out by the Farm Security Administration in conjunction with the Federal Works Agency, and the Office of the Defense Housing Coordinator. Funds for the new houses are provided under the Lanham Act and administered by the Federal Works Agency.

AN EMERGENCY CASTOR BEAN SEED PRODUCTION PROGRAM designed ultimately to furnish this country with a supply of adapted seed stocks in the event defense developments should make it expedient to increase domestic castor oil production in 1942 has been launched by the Department of Agriculture. The program will be limited to 11 counties in the black-land area north and south of Dallas, Tex. It will be carried out in cooperation with the Texas Power and Light Company, which has most of the available adapted seed stocks and technical information which it has acquired in its experiments with castor beans as a possible new crop in the agricultural territory it serves. The company is donating the seed and the services of some of its technical personnel. Under the seed program, it is contemplated that approximately 1,700 acres of castor beans will be planted. To encourage the planting of castor beans, farmers cooperating in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration program in the 11 Texas counties will be offered 3-1/2 cents a pound for cleaned seed and will be exempted from deductions from their 1941 Agricultural Conservation Program payments for excess soil-depleting acreage equal to five acres or 5 percent of the cropland, whichever is the greater, where the excess is due to the planting of castor

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beans. The Commodity Credit Corporation will finance the purchase of the harvested beans. The beans purchased will be stored pending the determination of whether a further expansion in domestic production in 1942 is desirable.

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS

AUSTRALIA: The Ministry of Supply in London advises that no increase in Australian wool prices to the United States is now under contemplation.

BURMA: In order to conserve foreign exchange, particularly dollars, the Government of Burma announced that many additional import items were being placed under licensing control, including the following of special interest to the United States: Hams, bacon, fruit juices of all kinds, and other foodstuffs previously exempt (excluding condensed milk and canned fish).

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: The Dominican Congress approved a bill requiring import permits for all types of edible lard.

FINLAND: Effective June 7 all customs import duties were increased 50 percent. Most food imports were not affected since they were on the free list.

GERMANY: The weekly butter ration for the period June 30, 1941, to July 27, 1941, for all normal consumers, and for adolescents between the ages of 14 to 18 years, has been increased by 62.5 grams, while a corresponding reduction has been made in the allotment of hog fats to such consumers. A similar adjustment has been made in the rations for self-providers producing butter. For self-providers producing hog fat no change has been made in the butter ration as the hog fat ration for such consumers remains the same. Although the total cheese ration is unchanged consumers may take 125 grams of curds in place of 62.5 grams of cheese. All normal consumers, children, and adolescents may now purchase 125 grams of rice instead of an equal quantity of alimentary pastes. Other rations of principal foodstuffs remain unchanged.

GREECE: Reports from Athens indicate that the German-occupying authorities have agreed to pay a 20 percent premium on all purchases in Greece for the German armed forces because of the price rise since the conquest. Credit in the clearing account will constitute the form of payment. A certain percentage of all types of products exported to Germany will be left for the use of domestic industries in Greece.

JAPAN: On the basis of a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry preliminary forecast the total wheat crop in Japan proper, including Hokkaido, will this year approximate 11,520,000 koku (58,096,000 bushels) representing a decline from 1940 of 12.2 percent. The actual harvest, however, is expected to be even lower.

RUSSIA: In view of the food shortage in Finland, a promise was given to the Finnish Minister to the Soviet Union on May 30 that 20,000 tons of grain over and above the 15,578 tons contracted for would be shipped to Finland in the shortest possible time without taking into consideration the fact that Finland was badly fulfilling its obligations in respect to the delivery of goods to the Soviet Union.

SWEDEN: The worst June frost in 50 years occurred on the night of June 8. The frost destroyed most fruit blossoms and damaged truck crops in the principal growing areas. The drought is continuing with attendant further deterioration of growing crops.

TURKEY: The most specific and authoritative information thus far available indicates that climatic conditions for cereals and root crops have been very favorable this year. It is believed that plantings of most crops are at least as large as and probably larger than a year ago, although no acreage estimates are available.

UNITED KINGDOM: The Ministries of Agriculture and Food announced jointly that supplies of imported cattle feeds will be very short next winter. Only limited quantities of wheat byproducts and oilcake will be available. Farmers were urged to make their farms self-sufficient if possible by growing their own feed. The War Agricultural Committee will supervise the stocking of farms and will be given power to see that inferior animals are slaughtered. Special prices as an inducement for immediate slaughter of lower grade cattle have been offered. The Ministry of Food officials expressed concern with the poor response to the slaughter program to date. Cattle are not putting on weight and poultry numbers are far too large to carry through the winter. While sheep and hog slaughter is progressing fairly well the government wants to avoid panic livestock slaughtering during the coming winter. Officials express the view that if better results are not obtained soon drastic measures would be invoked.

